

## Your Mother Should Know: A Comparison of Maternal and Paternal Attitudes and Behaviors Related to Gambling among Their Adolescent Children

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**Abstract** Parental attitudes and behaviors are significant factors in the gambling behavior of their children yet few attempts have been made to explore them in depth. The current study compared mothers and fathers on these factors with particular attention paid towards the gambling of their own teenage children. Surveys were completed by 3,089 parents across Canada with at least one child between the ages of 13 and 18 years. Participants responded to items in three general areas: (1) parental attitudes towards gambling among adolescents, (2) parental involvement in gambling with their children, and (3) parental awareness of and involvement in youth gambling education and prevention measures. Several gender differences were revealed. Fewer fathers compared to mothers viewed gambling as a serious issue among teens, particularly fathers of teenage boys. Mothers were more likely to report gambling on raffle and lottery scratch tickets with their children; fathers were more likely to report engaging in gambling activities with their children, particularly sons, involving sports or competitive themes (i.e., poker, games of skill, sports lotteries, and sports pools). Mothers were also more likely to report having conversations with their children about gambling and to be more aware of educational materials to which their children are being exposed. Given the differences between mothers and fathers in how they view and react to youth gambling as a serious issue, prevention programs should aim to address the gender-specific attitudes and behaviors of parents.

**Keywords** Parental attitudes · Gambling · Adolescents · Mothers · Fathers

Parents play a pivotal role in the current and future gambling behavior of their children. Gambling-related behaviors and attitudes of parents can enhance or decrease the risk that

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their children will begin gambling and the extent to which they will continue to gamble as they grow older. Parents may encourage their children directly, perhaps by actively participating in gambling activities with their children, or indirectly, by modeling gambling behavior and adopting permissive attitudes towards youth gambling. Conversely, parents may take direct measures to restrict their children's gambling by having discussions with them about gambling, setting and maintaining rules that prohibit gambling, or they may indirectly discourage their children from gambling by abstaining from gambling activities themselves. Importantly, parents who are aware of the potential risks associated with youth gambling are in a better position to monitor their child's gambling and observe the multiplicity of warning signs associated with gambling problems.

Even if parental attitudes and behaviors are significant factors in the gambling behavior of youth, few attempts have been made to explore them in depth. Notably, it remains unknown how the behaviors and attitudes regarding youth gambling differ between mothers and fathers, their awareness of gambling as a potential problem, and their concerns about preventing gambling problems. Gambling studies of parental attitudes and behaviors have typically examined mothers and fathers together even though gender has been shown to be a significant and reliable correlate of gambling (Grant and Kim 2004).

### **Parental Influence on Youth Gambling**

Research has consistently revealed a strong association between parental and youth gambling, both in terms of gambling involvement and gambling problems (e.g., Fisher 1993; Hardoon et al. 2004; Gupta, and Derevensky 1998; Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al. 2004; Magoon and Ingersoll 2006; Vachon et al. 2004; Weinstock et al. 2008; Wickwire et al. 2007; Winters et al. 1993; Wood and Griffiths 1998). Parents may influence the gambling activities of their children by setting an example with their own gambling behavior or by ignoring, or even tacitly approving of their children's gambling activities.

In a national prevalence study of gambling among British youth, children identified as having a gambling problem were more likely to report that their parents participated in multiple gambling activities and that their parents gambled "too much" compared to children without gambling problems (Fisher 1996). Children with gambling problems were also more likely to report that their parents approved of, or were not concerned with, their own gambling habits. Among all youth, almost twice as many underage children who made prohibited lottery ticket purchases reported that their parents approved or "didn't mind" if they played the lottery. More recently, Delfabbro and Thrupp (2003) reported that frequent gambling by adolescents was associated with higher parental gambling and pro-gambling attitudes. In contrast, children whose parents disapprove of them gambling exhibited lower incidences of gambling problems (Wickwire et al. 2007).

Children whose parents directly support their gambling activities appear to be at particularly high risk of developing gambling problems. Purchasing lottery tickets and scratch-cards for children is perhaps the most common means through which parents directly encourage youth gambling (Wood and Griffiths 1998). Felsher et al. (2003) queried 1,072 youth between the ages of 10 and 18 to examine the impact of perceived parental lottery involvement. A large proportion (77%) of underage youth reported that their parents purchased lottery tickets for them, with parents purchasing more tickets for children experiencing severe gambling problems.

## Parental Attitudes Concerning Youth Gambling

Many studies have investigated children's perceptions of parental attitudes yet few have examined parental attitudes towards youth gambling. Among the small number of such studies, Ladouceur and his colleagues conducted a series of telephone surveys to investigate knowledge among Quebec parents regarding youth gambling behavior (Côté et al. 2003; Ladouceur et al. 1998; Ladouceur et al. 2001). In the first of their studies, parents were asked about their gambling habits, attitudes and knowledge concerning youth gambling, and attitudes toward the gambling activities of their own child (Ladouceur et al. 1998). Among the 73% of parents in the sample who reported that they gambled, 42% admitted that they did so in the company of their child whereas 21% indicated purchasing a lottery ticket for their child. Parents also appeared to have a bias towards believing their own children were not negatively impacted by their gambling. Although a large majority of parents believed that there should be increased government restrictions to make gambling less accessible to youth (86%) and that there is a great need for school gambling prevention curriculums (91%), only 28% of parents believed that their child had already gambled, 50% were worried about their children's gambling activities, less than 40% tried to control and/or monitor their child's gambling, 5% prohibited them from gambling, and 32% informed their children that they did not agree with youth gambling in general.

In a more recent study, 50% of Quebec parents believed that youth between the ages of 9 and 17 years had gambled for money in the previous year (Côté et al. 2003). Interestingly, almost all (99%) believed that gambling can become a problem for some youth. Also, parents, on average, estimated that 17% of youth between the ages of 9 and 17 years are likely to be currently experiencing gambling problems. Despite parents overestimating the prevalence of problem gambling among youth, they tended to underestimate the probability that their own child was gambling or maybe experiencing gambling problems. More than half (55%) of the parents were not worried about their child's gambling, 25% expressed their disapproval of youth gambling to their child, and only 15% reported that they prohibited their children from gambling.

## Gender and Parental Attitudes

Although the studies by Ladouceur and colleagues provide important insight into the attitudes of parents towards youth gambling, (1) they have become somewhat dated given rapid changes in the gambling landscape over the past decade, (2) they failed to address important questions relevant to how parents perceive the gambling of their children (e.g., parental involvement in different forms of gambling with their children), and (3) they failed to control for parent gender, an important consideration for understanding youth gambling (Desai et al. 2005).

Gender of parents must be considered when examining parental attitudes towards youth gambling given differences between males and females in adult gamblers. Similar to the findings of adolescent studies, the general consensus across epidemiological studies is that men represent a larger proportion of problem gamblers (approximately two-thirds; for a review see Grant and Kim 2004). There is evidence of a differential impact between mothers and fathers on the gambling behavior of their children. For example, Oei and Raylu (2004) studied 189 families to investigate parental influence on offspring gambling behavior. Gambling-related thoughts and behaviors of parents, and those of fathers in particular, were positively correlated with the gambling activity of their children. Moreover,

parental gambling behavior was directly associated with their children's gambling behaviors whereas the relationship between parental gambling cognitions and child's gambling behavior was mediated by children's perceptions of gambling. These findings further suggest that parents, especially fathers, have a strong influence on their children's gambling, either directly through their own gambling behavior, or indirectly by influencing the gambling-related thoughts of their children which are, in turn, associated with gambling behavior.

Adult males versus females also differ in the extent to which they understand problem gambling and its countermeasures. A telephone survey of 2,500 adults in Ontario revealed that males were more likely to be familiar with the term "responsible gambling" but females were more likely to understand what responsible gambling entails (Turner et al. 2005). Although most people reported engaging in some responsible gambling practices, women were generally more likely to report behavior consistent with responsible gambling guidelines such as setting spending and time limits. Given a better understanding of responsible gambling among women, mothers are more likely to be vigilant of their children's gambling behavior and more likely to engage in conversations about problem gambling with their children.

There is also evidence of significant differences in how parents view the gambling of boys versus girls. In all three studies by Ladouceur and colleagues (Côté et al. 2003; Ladouceur et al. 1998; Ladouceur et al. 2001) it was found that most parents (79–81%) noted that girls gamble less frequently than boys, suggesting that gambling among boys is generally viewed as more normative. It has also been shown that parents have greater influence on the gambling involvement of daughters compared to sons in that parental monitoring was more impactful for girls versus boys (Chalmers and Willoughby 2006). It was suggested that parents may be monitoring the activities of females more than males and that gambling may be deemed a less acceptable activity for females versus males. Given the significance of gender differences, it is reasonable to conclude that parental attitudes towards youth gambling differ between boys and girls.

The current study sought to investigate the attitudes and behaviors of parents concerning the gambling activities of their own teenage children with a specific focus on gender differences. Wolfgang (1988) contends that gender differences in gambling involvement reflect sex-role socialization such that males are socialized more than females to engage in gambling activities. Today's North American parents grew up in a society in which gambling was viewed as a male-dominated activity that was perhaps even deemed normative among males and socially unacceptable among females. Consequently, parental attitudes and behaviors towards the gambling activities of their offspring were expected to differ depending on both their own gender and the gender of their children.

## Methods

### Participants

All participants were required to have at least one child residing with them between the ages of 13 and 18 years. More than 40,000 Canadian adults were contacted via email to solicit their participation. Respondents completed an online questionnaire via *Conformit* which allowed the exclusion of individuals who failed to meet the study's criteria. This recruitment and data collection procedure yielded a total of 3,089 completed surveys. A disproportionate number of women (65.8%) compared to men (34.2%) completed the survey, the mean age of participants was 44.9 years ( $SD=6.9$ ), with more than half the

sample falling between the ages of 40 and 50. The survey was available in both French and English with 15.1% of parents completing the study in French.

Participants from all 10 Canadian provinces participated. Those individuals with multiple children between 13 and 18 years of age were asked to report on their oldest child. The legal age to participate in most government-regulated gambling activities in Canada is 19 years except in the provinces of Alberta, Manitoba, and Quebec where individuals must be at least 18 years old. Accordingly, residents of these three provinces were required to have a child who was between 13–17 years (i.e., not allowed to gamble on potentially regulated forms of gambling).

The data was weighted on four participant variables: (1) parent gender, (2) gender of target child, (3) province of residence, and (4) age of target child. Data was weighted by parent and child gender to obtain approximately equal proportions of fathers and mothers as well as equal proportions of sons and daughters. Unweighted data revealed that 1,122 of the respondents were male (34.2%) and 2,157 were female (65.8%). Approximately equal numbers of boys (49.2%) and girls (50.8%) comprised the target children. Weightings by province of residence were included to reflect the Canadian population distribution (Statistics Canada 2009). The actual number of participants from each province is included in Table 1 along with the weighted response rates. Weighting by age of target child was performed in a similar fashion by forming three age groups (13–14 years, 15–16 years, 17–18 years) and by identifying the proportion of children in these age ranges according to census data (age of target child across the three age groups are shown in Table 2).

## Procedure

Individuals previously registered in a research database for an online data collection agency (*Research Now*) were contacted via e-mail to complete the online survey. The message outlined the aims, inclusion criteria, and the task requirements. Individuals provided consent electronically by selecting a “continue” button which was linked to the survey. The survey software streamlined the survey by omitting all items that were not applicable to individuals based upon prior responses. As an incentive for completing the survey, participants either received \$5 or were entered into a draw for a \$1,000 prize, depending upon recruitment procedures.

**Table 1** Actual and Weighted Number of Participants by Province

Province	N	Percentage	Percentage of Canadian residents	Weighted response rates
Alberta	500	15.2	9.3	291
British Columbia	500	15.2	13.9	430
<sup>a</sup> Manitoba	36	1.1	3.9	117
<sup>a</sup> New Brunswick/ Newfoundland/Prince Edward Island	43	1.3	0.8	23
Nova Scotia	500	15.2	6.9	213
Ontario	500	15.2	40.8	1,262
Quebec	700	21.3	21.1	653
Saskatchewan	500	15.2	3.3	101
Total	3,279	100.0	100.0	3,089

<sup>a</sup> Few participants were included in these provinces as no funding was provided for their participation

**Table 2** Actual and Weighted Age of Target Children

Age group	N	Percentage	Percentage in Canadian population	Weighted response rates
13–14 years	1,032	31.5	35.0	896
15–16 years	1,283	39.1	35.8	915
17–18 years	964	29.4	29.2	748
Total	3,279	100.0	100.0	2,558

## Measures and Data Analysis

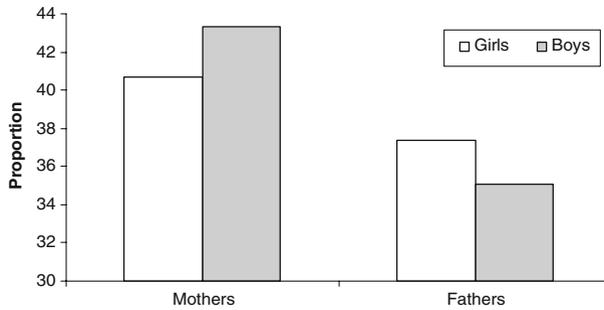
Items within the study addressed three areas: (1) parental attitudes towards gambling among adolescents in general, (2) parental gambling with their children, and (3) parental awareness of, and involvement in, youth gambling education and prevention measures. For the first area, parents rated the seriousness of underage gambling as an issue among adolescents by rating it on a five-point Likert-type scale (1 = *not at all serious*, 5 = *very serious*). Parents also indicated the extent to which they agreed with statements concerning the acceptability of gambling such as “there is nothing wrong with teens gambling occasionally.” For the second area, parents indicated whether they had participated in a variety of different gambling activities with their child, as well as specifically asking whether they had given their child a lottery ticket as a gift. For the third area, parents answered several questions regarding education and prevention measures for youth gambling. For example, parents were asked, “To your knowledge, has your child’s school ever provided prevention programs or educational material in the area of gambling?” Parents were also asked about their personal involvement in addressing youth gambling with their own child (e.g., “How frequently do you have conversations with your child about gambling?”). Chi-square analyses were carried out to compare maternal versus paternal responses on their responses to items in each of the three areas separately for daughters and sons. Where necessary, responses were categorized dichotomously to allow chi-square tests to be performed.

## Results

### Parental Attitudes Towards Adolescent Gambling

Overall, 39% of parents rated youth gambling as a “serious” or “very serious” issue on a five-point scale ( $M=3.23$ ,  $SD=1.19$ ) and approximately one-third responded neutrally (32.4%) whereas the remainder (28.4%) rated it as “not serious” or “not at all serious.” After categorizing responses as either serious (serious and very serious) or non-serious (neutral, not serious, and not at all serious responses), a chi-square analysis revealed a significant association between parent gender and attitude towards youth gambling as a serious issue for sons,  $\chi^2(1, N=1,543)=10.93$ ,  $p=.001$ ,  $Phi=.084$ , but not for daughters  $\chi^2(1, N=1,545)=1.75$ ,  $p=.185$ ,  $Phi=.034$  (see Fig. 1). As shown, for girls, marginally fewer fathers viewed gambling as a serious teen issue (37.4%) compared to mothers (40.7%); but for boys, even fewer fathers did so (35.1%) whereas more mothers felt it is a serious teen issue (43.3%).

The results of chi-square analyses for parent responses to four additional questions concerning their attitudes about the seriousness of youth gambling are presented in Table 3. In general, fathers were more likely to report lenient attitudes towards youth gambling.



**Fig. 1** Proportion of mothers versus fathers who view gambling among teens as a serious issue by gender of child

Interestingly, a greater proportion of fathers compared to mothers agreed that there is nothing wrong with their teenage daughters gambling occasionally (11.1% vs. 7.8%), even though a greater proportion of fathers versus mothers of teenage girls believed that teens are at increased risk for gambling problems (28.5% vs. 23.0%). Still further, a greater proportion of fathers versus mothers with a teenage son indicated that it is acceptable for teens to gamble with friends (12.8% vs. 9.3%) and a smaller percentage of fathers reporting on teenage sons agreed that underage gambling increases the risk for problems later in life (49.1% vs. 56.5%).

#### Parental Involvement in Gambling with Their Children

Chi-square analyses were also used to compare maternal and paternal involvement in various gambling activities with their children. Separate comparisons were made for sons and daughters. The results revealed several interesting trends (see Table 4). Although more mothers reported participating in some form of gambling with their children compared to fathers, the differences were not significant for sons and daughters. However, several differences are observed when individual gambling activities are examined. A greater proportion of mothers compared to fathers reported participating in raffle tickets for

**Table 3** Chi-square Results for Parental Attitudes about the Seriousness of Youth Gambling, Separated by Gender of Child

Attitude statement		Mothers	Fathers	Chi-square
There is nothing wrong with teens gambling occasionally	Daughters	7.8%	11.1%	5.04*
	Sons	10.4%	12.3%	1.43
Teens are at more risk for gambling problems than adults	Daughters	23.0%	28.5%	6.12*
	Sons	29.2%	31.4%	0.93
Gambling for money is acceptable if you are just playing with your friends	Daughters	9.8%	10.0%	0.01
	Sons	9.3%	12.8%	4.76*
Underage gambling escalates to a gambling addiction/problem	Daughters	50.5%	48.3%	.79
	Sons	56.5%	49.1%	8.61**

Percentages represent proportion of parents, within parent gender, who agreed or strongly agreed with each statement

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$

**Table 4** Chi-square Results for Parental Involvement in Various Gambling Activities with their Children, Separated by Gender of Child

Gambling activity		Mothers	Fathers	Chi-square
Joint lottery draw tickets (e.g., 6/49, Super 7)	Daughters	11.1%	12.2%	3.91
	Sons	10.9%	10.8%	0.01
Raffle tickets for fundraising	Daughters	39.6%	34.8%	3.87*
	Sons	39.9%	33.2%	7.66**
Lottery scratch tickets	Daughters	41.1%	36.6%	3.22
	Sons	38.7%	32.8%	5.81*
Poker	Daughters	2.8%	5.3%	5.92*
	Sons	2.2%	4.9%	8.31**
Bingo	Daughters	10.8%	8.0%	3.42
	Sons	8.6%	6.6%	2.12
Betting on activities participated in together (e.g., hockey, billiards, other sports)	Daughters	1.8%	2.5%	0.76
	Sons	2.2%	6.1%	14.59**
Sports lottery (e.g., Proline, Sports Select, Mis-O-Jeu)	Daughters	0.8%	0.6%	0.09
	Sons	1.2%	3.2%	7.66**
Sports pool (e.g., hockey pool, fantasy leagues)	Daughters	2.6%	5.3%	7.50**
	Sons	3.8%	7.5%	10.20**
Betting on professional sports games	Daughters	0.0%	1.7%	13.08**
	Sons	1.3%	1.6%	0.18
Have gambled with child in some form	Daughters	60.8%	56.4%	3.12
	Sons	57.4%	54.9%	0.95

Percentages represent proportion of parents, within parent gender, who endorsed participation in gambling activity with their teenage son or daughter

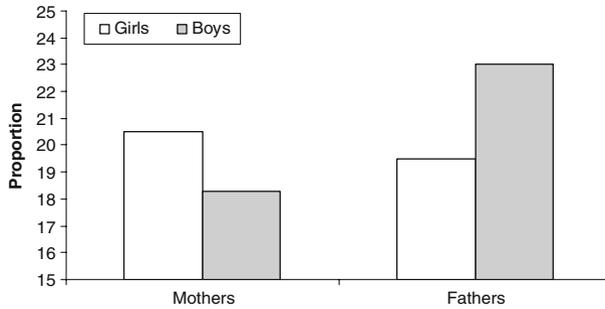
\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$

fundraising with both sons and daughters as well as lottery scratch tickets with sons. In contrast, more fathers compared to mothers reported participating in multiple gambling activities with their children centered on sports (i.e., sports lottery, sports pools, pro sports betting) and competition (i.e., poker, games of skill).

Because purchasing lottery tickets is a common means through which parents inadvertently encourage youth gambling, a separate chi-square test was performed to compare the responses of mothers and fathers to the question, “Have you ever given your child a lottery ticket, scratch ticket or sports lottery ticket as a holiday, birthday, or other gift?” For daughters, 20.5% of mothers reported having given them a lottery ticket as a gift whereas 19.5% of fathers reported doing so. The difference in these proportions was not significant,  $\chi^2(1, N=1,545)=.21, p=.647$ . However, for sons, significantly more fathers reported gifting a lottery ticket (23.0%) compared to mothers (18.3%),  $\chi^2(1, N=1,545)=5.35, p=.021$  (See Fig. 2).

#### Parental Awareness of and Involvement in Youth Gambling Education and Prevention

Finally, paternal responses to questions related to education and prevention measures for youth gambling revealed more mothers (38.7%) than fathers (33.9%) having conversations about gambling with daughters,  $\chi^2(1, N=1,545)=3.91, p=.048$ . Similarly, for sons, more



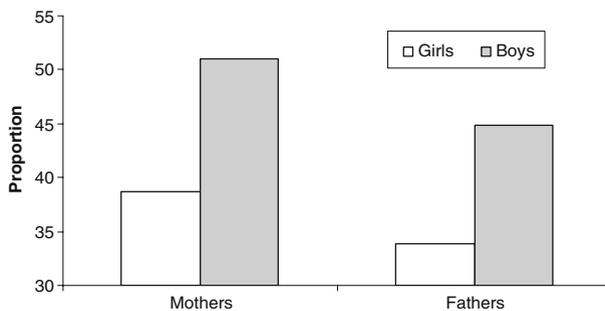
**Fig. 2** Proportion of mothers versus fathers who report having purchased their child a lottery ticket, scratch ticket or sports lottery ticket as a gift by gender of child

mothers (51.0%) than fathers (44.9%) reported having conversations,  $\chi^2(1, N=1,544)=5.73, p=.017$ . When examined separately by parent gender, greater proportions of both fathers and mothers reported having conversations with sons compared to daughters,  $\chi^2(1, N=1,545)=19.77, p<.001, \chi^2(1, N=1,544)=23.63, p<.001.$ , respectfully (see Fig. 3).

## Discussion

Parental responses concerning the gambling activities of their children revealed several gender differences. In terms of attitudes towards youth gambling, fewer fathers viewed it as a serious issue among teens compared to mothers, particularly fathers of teenage boys. In addition, fathers generally reported more lenient attitudes towards youth gambling compared to mothers.

Regarding parental involvement in youth gambling, approximately one-fifth of parents reported buying a lottery ticket for their children, and fathers were more likely than mothers to buy a lottery ticket for a son. An examination of different gambling activities showed that mothers and fathers differed in the types of gambling activities they tended to participate in with their children. Whereas mothers were more likely to report gambling on raffle and lottery scratch tickets with their children, fathers were more likely to report engaging in gambling activities with their children involving sports or competitive themes. Not surprisingly, these types of gambling activities appeared to be predominantly father-son



**Fig. 3** Proportion of mothers versus fathers who reported having conversations about gambling with their children at least sometimes by gender of child

gambling ventures, with fathers being much more likely than mothers to gamble with sons on poker, games of skill (e.g., billiards, other sports), sports lotteries, and sports pools. Although fathers were also more likely than mothers to gamble with daughters on some of these activities (i.e., poker, sports pools, pro sports betting), they reported approximately equal or higher rates of the same activities with sons.

Mothers were more likely to report having conversations with their children about gambling compared to fathers, regardless of the child's gender. In addition, more mothers and fathers reported having conversations about gambling with sons compared to daughters—likely because gambling is more prevalent among young males and therefore more likely to warrant a conversation. Fathers appeared to have less awareness of youth gambling initiatives compared to mothers in that they were more likely to indicate that they did not know whether their children had been exposed to educational materials or prevention programs for youth gambling. This latter finding suggests that mothers are more cognizant of their children's gambling behavior and the prevention materials they are being exposed to. Mothers seem to be more involved in the process of monitoring and implementing gambling prevention measures for their children.

The current findings have implications for programs aimed at raising parental awareness of youth gambling as a serious issue and the ways in which parents can manage problems that may arise as a result of their children gambling. On a broad scale, a majority of parents (61%) did not view gambling as a serious issue among teenagers suggesting that prevention programs need to be improved so that more parents become aware of the potential risks. A majority of parents in the current sample (57.4%) also reported gambling with their children in some form suggesting a need to inform parents of the risks associated with this behavior. A study by Gupta and Derevensky (1997) showed that a large majority of adolescents who have gambled reported doing so with family members and almost half indicate that they have gambled with their parents. In addition, only 10% of young adolescent gamblers (13–14 years old) reported that they feared being caught gambling by their parents. Clearly, parents are lacking information about the negative influence of actively participating in gambling activities with their children. This behavior suggests to children that, although most forms of underage gambling are illegal, it is not as risky as other proscribed activities such as underage drinking. Certainly fewer parents are actively drinking alcohol with their adolescent children, most likely because they understand the risks involved in exposing their children to alcohol at an early age. A similar message needs to be conveyed concerning youth gambling.

The current findings also suggest a need to develop gender-specific programs that address the unique characteristics of mothers versus fathers. Given that mothers are more likely to view youth gambling as a serious issue and to scrutinize the gambling behaviors of their children, prevention programs for mothers may be improved by providing more detail on how to effectively monitor the gambling of their children, assess potential problems, and seek appropriate help. It should be noted that the relationship between parental monitoring and youth gambling behavior has not yet been firmly established. For example, several studies have shown that low levels of parental monitoring are associated with increased risk of adolescent gambling involvement and problems (Magoon and Ingersoll 2006; Vachon et al. 2004; Vitaro et al. 2001). Contrarily, in two longitudinal samples of adolescents, parental monitoring was not related to the problem gambling severity scores of either boys or girls (Barnes et al. 2005). However, these studies examined more general parental monitoring of their children's activities rather than specifically monitoring the gambling activities of their children. Mothers would benefit from practical strategies for supervising their children's gambling and talking to their children about gambling.

For fathers, a more general approach to prevention may be required in which they are educated about the risks associated with youth gambling. For example, fathers would benefit from learning that gambling can be a serious issue among teens that can lead to negative consequences. In addition, they should be made aware that gambling on sports and competitive pursuits may not be an appropriate activity for children. Although these forms of gambling may appear to be a good opportunity to share in common interests, particularly with teenage sons, fathers need to understand that these “bonding experiences” may have an overall detrimental effect.

The current study is one of few specifically aimed at examining parental attitudes towards youth gambling. The methodology of the current study differed from previous studies with similar objectives, namely those of Ladouceur and colleagues (Côté et al. 2003; Ladouceur et al. 1998; Ladouceur et al. 2001). Major differences include the questions parents were asked and the method of data collection—their data was collected via phone interviews whereas the current data was collected using an online survey. Also noteworthy is the method by which the target child was determined. Recall that parents for the current study were told to answer each question in reference to their oldest teenage child. However, the target child in the studies of Ladouceur and colleagues was determined randomly (i.e., next child to celebrate birthday) resulting in lower mean ages of target children in their samples. For example, the mean age of the target children for one of their studies was  $M=10.7$  years ( $SD=3.7$ ) (Ladouceur et al. 1998) which is younger than the target children of the current sample ( $M=15.4$  years,  $SD=1.6$ ). Consequently, the current findings are more likely to reflect the parental attitudes and behaviors related to adolescent gambling as opposed to gambling among younger children.

Although data was collected across all ten Canadian provinces, the findings cannot be generalized to all Canadians given the omission of data from the three Canadian territories. Also, several provinces were under-sampled and weighted data cannot completely correct for regional differences that might have been observed had larger, more representative samples been drawn. Although parents were asked to respond to questions with their oldest teenage child in mind, it could not be verified whether they followed this instruction. For example, parents of multiple children may have reported on their gambling activities with all of their children rather than just their oldest teenage child.

It is hoped that the current findings on parental attitudes and behaviors concerning the gambling activities of their children with a specific focus on gender differences will help guide the development of improved awareness and prevention programs for youth gambling. Mothers and fathers differ in how they view and react to youth gambling as a serious issue and these differences vary across daughters and sons. Prevention programs should aim to address the gender-specific attitudes and behaviors of parents.

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